

VZCZCXRO2144
PP RUEHBC RUEHDA RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #0600/01 0610733
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 010733Z MAR 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5981
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000600

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: KIRKUK PROVINCIAL COUNCIL CHAIR DESCRIBES ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES OF DISTRICT AND SUB-DISTRICT COUNCILS

REF: BAGHDAD 586

[1](#)1. This is a PRT Kirkuk cable.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary: Chairman of the Kirkuk Provincial Council Rizgar Ali convened an information sharing session on February 17 with the district and sub-district councils of the predominantly Arab areas. Regarding the Provincial Powers Law (PPL), he said it would not take effect until after provincial elections but would provide the basis for clarifying the roles and responsibilities of local government bodies and positions. The PPL will provide a legal basis for the conduct of local government, which has been lacking since the institution of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), in Rizgar's opinion. Rizgar informed subordinate level council members on the sources of funds available to them and called on them to be more active in coordinating local affairs with line ministry officials, their own administrators and the Provincial Council (PC).
End summary.

[1](#)3. (U) Chairman Rizgar Ali convened an information sharing session on February 17 with the district and sub-district councils of the predominately Arab areas of the Province to cover the status of the Law of Governorates Not Organized into a Region (colloquially known as the PPL), the financing sources for local government and how to access them, operating and maintenance expense budgeting for local councils, the requirement for and how to operate committees, coordination with the local offices of the Baghdad ministries and the Executive authorities, Councils' relationships with their constituents and media relations.

[1](#)4. (U) Regarding the PPL, Rizgar said that it still needs to be signed by "The President and his two deputies," with no mention of the following step of the GOI publishing it in the Gazette. It will be implemented after the next election but until then, the Governorates act of 1969 and CPA 71 will continue to provide the authorities of the local councils.

[1](#)5. (U) Rizgar told the council members that the sources of funds available for local councils come from three sources: the local (aka district) allocations of the Provincial project funding provided through the Provincial Council; the Ministries' budgets for their offices' operations in the province; and grants made by the GOI and international donors.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Mr. Rizgar, a PUK member and part of the Kirkuk Brotherhood List (KBL), upon seeing Mr. Rakan, the recently selected Arab Deputy Governor entering the chamber and attempting to take a seat on the floor, invited him to take a seat at the Chairman's bench at the front of the PC Chamber. (Comment: This is significant as KBL cooperation with Mr. Rakan, a key player in the "Arab Bloc" and well-connected Hawija district leader, is becoming increasingly public. End comment.)

[1](#)7. (U) Rizgar said that local councils should have effective committees with at least three members on each and they should coordinate with their PC counterpart committees. They should coordinate horizontally with line-ministry officials and also with

their appointed administrators (aka Mayors). (Note: The term "Mayor" is in common use for these positions, but "administrator" is more accurate in translation and official duties. End note.) Their local council chairs should attend the PC sessions. They should also be available to their constituents, inviting them to local council sessions and also including NGOs, "notable people, and village representatives."

18. (U) Rizgar directed the councils to prepare operating and maintenance budgets based on funding becoming available in the near future. Councils will be able to use these funds for procurement of vehicles and other equipment and for office supplies.

19. (U) Interspersed throughout the session, Rizgar addressed questions posed by attendees. The district administrator of Abassi complained that district and sub-district officials were not involved in the strategic projects planning process and that population figures were not correct. This error produced incorrect PC funds allocations. The reservation of 25 percent of capital projects funds for internally displaced persons was also raised. Rizgar addressed the census issue by saying, "it is too difficult to hold a census now." Another local council member complained that they lack the resources to perform their jobs and that local line ministry office directors do not cooperate with them. Officials also asked for weapons carrying permits. Rizgar responded that Coalition Forces (CF) had previously issued weapons permits but were no longer doing so and these were now a Ministry of Interior issue. He recommended that they coordinate with their local CF commander to gain permission for personal carry but this would work in their local areas only. Rizgar also discussed privatizing the State Owned Enterprises, based on local resistance to this policy in evidence in the meeting. Local council members called for increased PC visibility, including Rizgar visiting their areas.

BAGHDAD 00000600 002 OF 002

10. (SBU) In discussion with IPAO following the session, Rizgar confided that he intended to hold a similar session for the councils of the predominately Kurdish districts "next week." (Note: Those sessions were not scheduled at the time, IPAO confirmed immediately following the meeting. End note.) On the topic of the clarification of authorities, since he feels that the roles and responsibilities between Councils and Governors and lower level administrators (aka "Mayors") are not clear, Rizgar opined that if the PPL is ratified, it will provide a basis for clear legal guidance to the branches of Provincial and Local Government. He stated, however, that the law would not go into effect until after elections and that it was likely that local gridlock would continue until then. Per Rizgar, while some feel that the Governor's position was strengthened by the addition of the Prime Minister and COR in removing a Governor, he feels that it is just an additional mechanism and one that would be hard to use and that the Council's power will grow as part of the overall increase in standing of provincial government in general.

11. (U) Comment. It has been difficult to pin down Rizgar's view on whether any relevant law existed granting powers to provincial and local governments, with CPA 71 given only lip service. Conversations with key advisors (reftel) indicate that the advice he has been getting is that there is no legal basis for Council action until the PPL is enacted, explaining much of the PC's caution to date. As Rizgar has noted, since the PPL contains a provision that the law would not come into effect until after elections are held, when combined with the PPL's language calling for elections no later than October 1, 2008, local governance stagnation will continue until after a new council convenes. End comment.

CROCKER